Harpers Feb. 1900
Pam. Af.
Congo
93

The Congo below Boma.

Boulger, D. C.

THE CONGO STATE AND CENTRAL-AFRICAN PROBLEMS

BY DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER

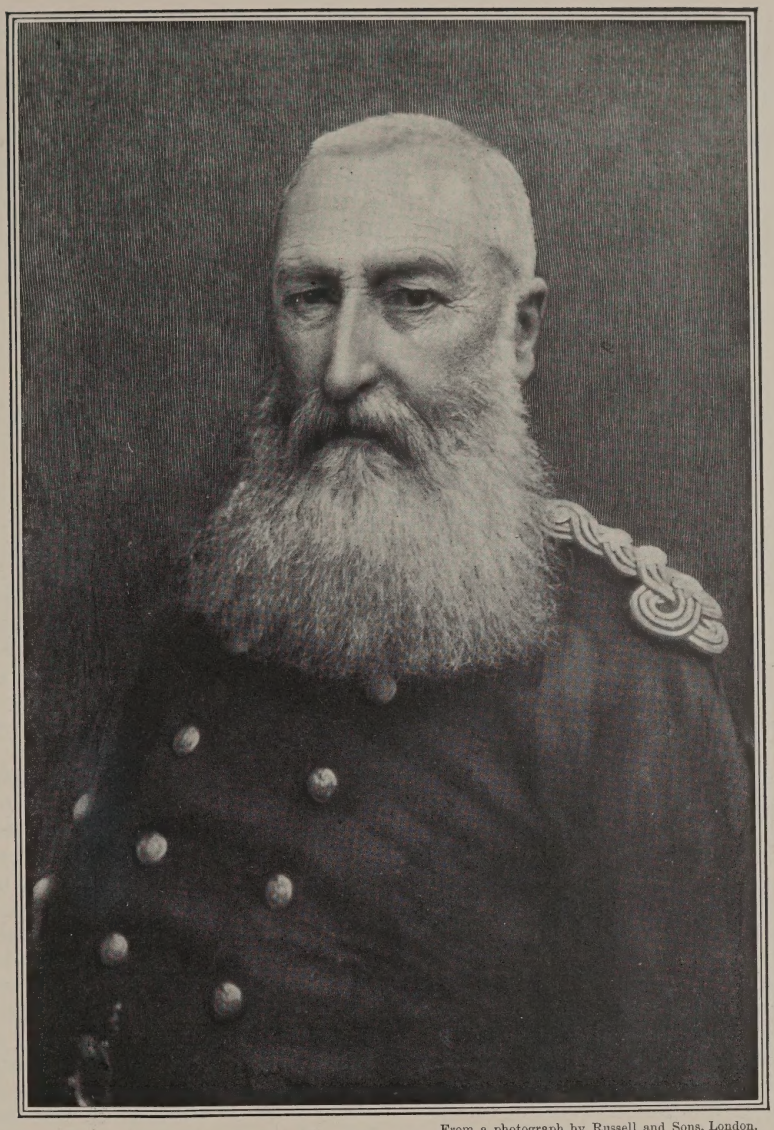
THE partition of Africa has advanced so far, the position of the great powers in that continent is so clearly defined, or at least their possessions are so well grouped, that it is not premature to take a dive into the future and see, if we can, what fortune one at least of them is likely to have in dealing with the difficult problems that follow hard on the heels of those who have so easily appropriated immense portions of the Dark Continent. The former mode of founding colonies was by a slow and steady process of building up, during which the great difficulties of the situation, whether in Asia or in America, were faced, overcome, and removed, so that the possession or creation of the colonizing state, whether an Indian Empire or a great and free community like the United States, ever developing with the vigor of youth, represented a solid achievement and triumph that admitted of no doubt and not even of discussion. But in Africa new methods have come into fashion. There we have colorings of the map without the solution of problems, and within these rings of color exist difficulties and perhaps dangers for all the representatives of civilization which have not been approached or considered, the magnitude and complexity of which are still unknown, and for which the available means of a happy solution may in some cases prove inadequate. But for all the task, more or less difficult in proportion to the local obstacles, is the same. It is the advancement of civilization by the repression of crime and brutality, by the elevation of inferior races to something like a level with ourselves, and by the maintenance of peace. The common goal before all the responsible governments in Africa should render every one of them considerate towards the others. They placed themselves in the van of a generous movement when they accepted their share of Africa, and at the same time they incurred a moral responsibility towards others engaged in the same undertaking. If there is any quarter of the globe where international rivalry, jealousies, and criticism should cease, it is in Central Africa, where the Congo State has sprung into existence before our eyes, and where, for twenty years and more, King Leopold of the Belgians has been engaged on a work of noble beneficence.

The Congo State differs from the other

divisions of Africa in one important particular. It is the dependency not of a great power, but of a small state which is pledged by the conditions of its existence to neutrality. It exists by virtue of the treaties it concluded with all the civilized countries of the world, which gave collectively a solemn sanction to its creation at the Berlin Conference of 1885, because, as Prince Bismarck said, the powers aimed at "withdrawing a great part of the African Continent from the vicissitudes of general politics by restraining national rivalries to the pacific competition of commerce and industry." The Congo State, whether regarded in its present condition as a separate sovereignty or in its future status as a Belgian colony, is bound to occupy a neutral position, so long as the treaties referred to and the Berlin Act retain their force. But at the same time it has not that element of security against reckless aggression which is furnished by the visible strength of a great power. It exists by the good faith of the powers, but for sure stability it has also to enlist their good-will, sympathy, and moral support. More or less dependent on public opinion, which the mighty nations can and do ignore outside their jurisdictions, it cannot prudently afford to slumber over its undertakings. It must constantly be up and doing; it must refute hostile or malicious criticism by showing good work. The responsible directors of the Congo territory declare that they have done and are doing good work, and point triumphantly to the evidence of some remarkable statistics. Its opponents will listen to nothing in favor of its administration, and when the progress in trade and revenue is seen to be irrefutable, the same critics turn round and impugn the motives, and even the honesty, of the ruler and his ministers. But while the Congo State can never hope to silence all its detractors, it can certainly avert shipwreck from the gales of adverse criticism. The bark of state may be tossed in the tempestuous seas raised around its course by "envy, hatred, and malice," but it will not founder while it can show that it has remained true to the principles of its inception and constant in well-doing.

The Congo State was the direct outcome of "the International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Central Africa," formed under the auspices of King Leopold, as the result of the first Brussels Conference in 1876, and of its successor, "the International Association of the Congo," created soon after the return of Mr. H. M. Stanley from his great journey across Africa. That remarkable explorer had dwelt in his letters with much force on the importance of the Congo, asserting that the power which acquired its control would be mistress in Central Africa, and command the great commercial route from the interior westward. The statement was publicly made, but no one seems to have seized its full import except King Leopold, who at once invited Mr. Stanley to Brussels, and concerted with him a plan of action in Central Africa. A large expenditure had at once to be incurred, a great responsibility with a very uncertain prospect of return had to be faced, and it was only King Leopold's courage and anxious desire to endow his country with a colony that led him to assign the greater part of the private fortune he had inherited from his father to the task. The very large sum thus expended out of the royal purse in gaining a foothold in Central Africa has never been recouped, and need not be now, because King Leopold, in his will bequeathing as sovereign the State to Belgium, specifically states that his Majesty does not under any circumstances wish for reimbursement, or that the sums advanced to found it should appear to the debit of the State. The generosity of the sovereign as donor has been as perfect as the sagacity displayed in the almost unique rôle of creator.

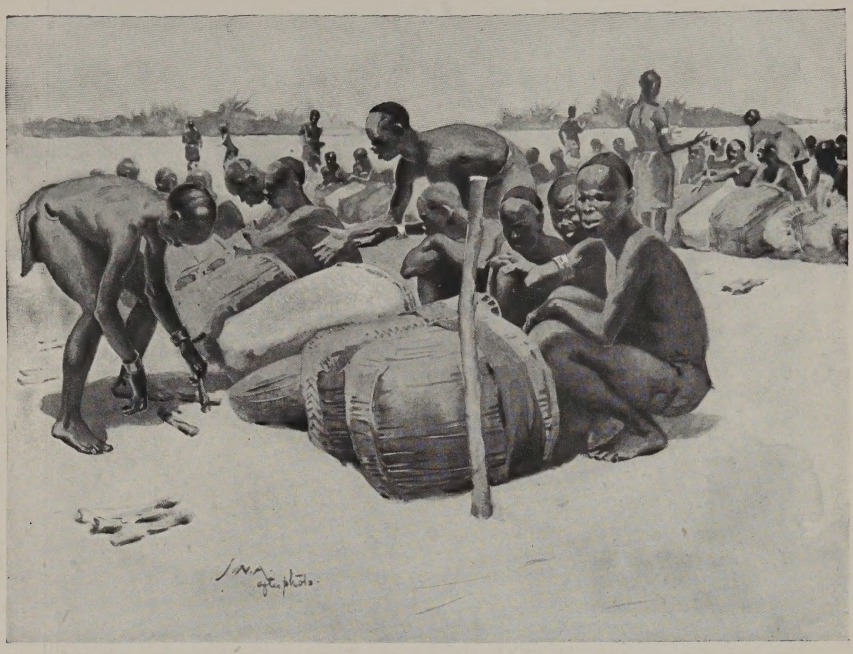
This preliminary work had been fairly accomplished when, at the end of 1884, the powers met in a second African conference at Berlin, by the invitation of Germany, acting in accord with France, to regulate the position in Central Africa. At the same time the situation had become one of anxiety for King Leopold, who saw his comparatively humble undertaking menaced by the designs of several great powers in Africa. It was by no means clear, for instance, what view might be taken of the treaties concluded and territorial possessions acquired in Central Africa. What was the status of the International Association according to the jurists? Could it exercise sovereign rights, or were its acquisitions mere purchases of property? When the whole question was brought before the diplomatists at Berlin, the King of the Belgians occupied a posi-



From a photograph by Russell and Sons, London.

LEOPOLD II., KING OF THE BELGIANS.

tion of considerable moral advantage. He could point, on the one hand, to the very considerable sacrifices he had made, and, on the other, to the strong position he had acquired on the Congo as a base for operations against the Arab slave-dealers. The common object of all the powers was the suppression of the slave trade, the barbarous cruelties of which, as related by Livingstone and his successors, had horrified the civilized world. In 1876 King Leopold designated it as "a plague spot that every friend of civilization would desire to see disappear." In 1884 the same sentiment continued to govern the civilized world in this matter, although the chances of success were diminished by the temporary triumph of Mahdism in the Egyptian Soudan. The work to be accomplished at the Berlin Conference came under three heads. There was, first of all, Prince Bismarck's idea about confining African struggles to the pacific contests of commerce; there



MARKET-DAY AT NYANGWE.

was, secondly, the necessity of defining the position acquired by means of King Leopold's very considerable efforts and success on the Congo; and thirdly, the possibility of taking some fresh measures for the suppression of the slave trade could not be eliminated from any discussion on the affairs of Central Africa.

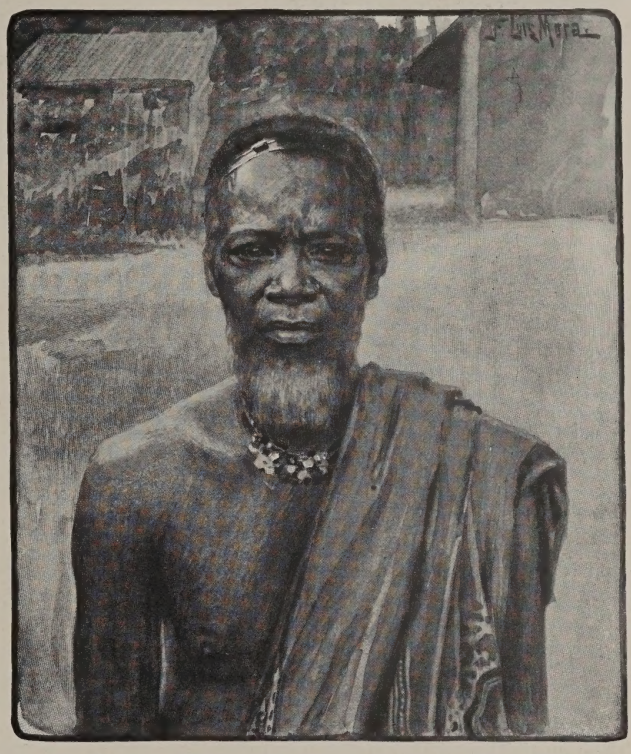
Prince Bismarck appreciated King Leopold's enterprise, and some months before the conference declared that "Germany was sympathetic to the Belgian enterprises on the Congo, which had for their object the founding of an independent state." One week before the conference he went further than this by recognizing the Congo Association as an independent and friendly state. The result of the negotiations, which were carried on concurrently with the conference, was that nearly all the powers recognized the Association to be an independent, self-governing, and sovereign state. If an opinion is to be formed from the words of the diplomatists at Berlin, every one was glad at the result. Baron de Courcel, in the name of France, said, "The new state owes its origin to the generous aspirations and the enlightened initiation of a prince surrounded by the respect of Europe." The British representative, Sir Edward Malet, concluded his remarks with these words: "We salute the new-born state with the greatest cordiality, and we express the sincere desire to see it flourish and grow under his ægis."

With regard to the first head of the work of the Berlin Conference, three articles or sets of articles were devoted to the maintenance of peace and freedom of trade in the basin of the Congo and the surrounding countries. To attain these objects there were to be freedom of commerce, the neutrality of the territory formed, and freedom of navigation throughout the region defined in the first article of the General Act. With regard to the second, the several treaties defined the status of King Leopold's acquisitions as that of a sovereign independent state, and the conference hailed this result as the most practical and useful outcome of its labors. The feeling with which the intimation was received might be described as one of relief. Every one saw that there was work to be done in Central Africa, but no one was prepared to do it, however reluctant any of the great powers might have been to see it attempted by a possible rival. The crea-

tion of a neutral state dependent on one of the smaller European states was the happy solution that allayed all fears and satisfied everybody. With regard to the third object, of instituting measures for the suppression of the slave trade, all the signatories declared that "these territories may not serve as a market or means of transit for the trade in slaves, of whatever race they may be. Each of the powers binds itself to employ all the means at its disposal for putting an end to this trade and for punishing those who engage in it."

The state thus formed by the King of the Belgians did not become a part of the Belgian monarchy, because Belgian opinion was not ready to accept the responsibility of a great colony, and also because it was doubtful how far it would constitute a breach of the declaration made to France in April, 1884, by the Congo Association at a moment of great need, to the effect that "it would never cede its possessions to another power without a prior understanding with France, and that if it were compelled to alienate any of its territory, France should have the right of pre-emption." But the Belgian Chambers unanimously accorded King Leopold permission to become sovereign of the Independent State of the Congo, the tie between the two states being the personal one of having the same ruler. In this point no change has taken place within the last fifteen years, nor is it probable that any alteration will occur during the present reign. In two important particulars, however, matters are changed, and the path has been smoothed for the acquisition by Belgium of the colony acquired by the wisdom of its sovereign. The convention between France and the Congo State of April 29, 1887, provided that "the right of pre-emption accorded to France could not be claimed as against Belgium, of which King Leopold is the sovereign." The second circumstance was the publication, in 1890, of King Leopold's will as sovereign of the Congo State, bequeathing "to Belgium all his sovereign rights over the Independent State of the Congo, as well as all the benefits, rights, and advantages attached to that sovereignty." The reversion of the Congo State to Belgium is thus assured.

Having now described the origin and present status of the Congo territory in its international aspect, and also as a colony created by the efforts of a large section of the Belgian nation, a brief survey may be taken of the work it has done and the progress it has accomplished in the fifteen years, or rather less, that have elapsed since its creation. When the Berlin Conference was engaged on its labors there was little or no evidence in favor of the Central-African possession ever proving profitable. There was no revenue. The only trade seemed to consist of ivory, which had to be taken



A CHIEF AT INKISSE.

IN PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY.

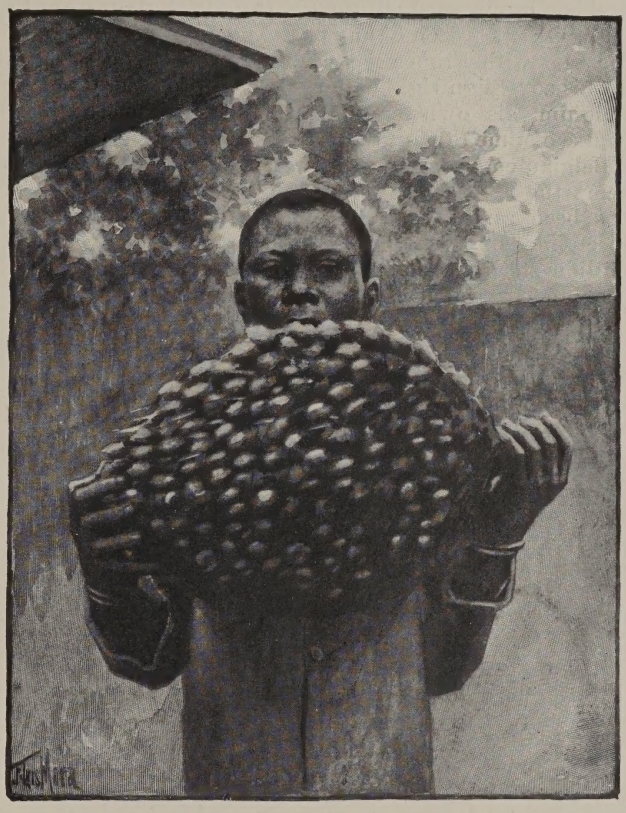
by force from the black chiefs, whether as spoil of war or as tribute. Even the mighty river which offered a natural highway across Africa, and the navigation of which formed one of the chief cares of the diplomatists, was found to be cut off from the Atlantic and the outer world by two hundred miles of cataracts. The optimist had little or nothing to go on; all the evidence favored pessimism; and even Mr. Stanley was driven to declare, in expressive language, "Without a railway, I do not value the Congo State at a dollar." It therefore seemed for many years as if all King Leopold's efforts and sacrifices had only resulted in the acquisition of a barren territory, productive of nothing but disappointment and anxiety. Only within the last year has a marked progress been effected, and the world has suddenly become alive to the fact that a very remarkable achievement has been silently accomplished in the interior of the Dark Continent, and that, despite ill-natured criticism and good-natured pity, an African power unlike any other has come into existence.

In the first year of the State's existence the revenue was no more than £3000, and it was not until after the second Brussels Conference, in 1890, that it showed any notable increase. That conference was summoned for the express purpose of concerting further measures against the slave trade, which continued to be carried on with unabated vigor and ferocity. The result of the discussions was the signature of a General Act, embodying some general considerations of a moral rather than material value, binding the powers to abstain from ambitious schemes at the expense of one another in Africa, but imposing on the Congo State alone onerous and immediate duties. As these duties entailed heavy sacrifices, it was only right —it was, indeed, absolutely necessary—to provide the State with the means of executing the mandate imposed by civilization and its position. Up to this point the State possessed no revenue, but was entirely dependent for its resources on the results of the small and uncertain trade in ivory, to which was added palm nuts and oil. From these sources the State drew, in the year of the Brussels Conference, about £20,000, and its expenditure, conducted on the closest lines, was ten times as much. This enormous proportional deficit could not be sustained indefinitely, yet the injunctions of the Brussels Conference necessarily added to the expenditure and to the strain on the military resources of the nascent State. The preamble of the General Act with which the conference closed admitted that "the obligations imposed rendered it ne-

cessary for the State to acquire new resources to discharge them," and the following declaration was agreed upon:

"The signatory or adhering powers which have possessions or exercise protectorates in the said conventional basin of the Congo may, so far as any authorization is necessary for that purpose, impose on imported merchandise dues of which the tariff shall not exceed an equivalent of ten per cent. on the value at the port of importation, with the exception altogether of spirits, which shall be regulated by the terms of Chapter vi. of the General Act of this day."

The practical result of this measure was that in seven years the revenue, raised entirely in the State, increased to £600,000, and formed not ten but seventy per cent. of the expenditure. In less than three years there may even be an equilibrium independent of the King's annual contribution of £40,000. It is very evident that the Congo State, with its considerable and growing revenue of three-quarters of a million sterling from all sources, is a very different institution from what it was during the years of early struggle, when it had little or no revenue, and but moderate expectations of ever earning one. Within the same period the trade of the country has taken a not less remarkable stride forward. Owing principally to the discovery of the caoutchouc or rubber bearing liana, *Landolphia florida*, the exports rose from £70,000 in 1886 to nearly a million sterling in 1898. In the course of the latter year the railway turning the cataracts and placing the ocean port of Matadi in communication with the upper river port of Leopoldville, on Stanley Pool, was completed, after a struggle of many years with the difficulties of the route. The construction of this line has supplied the defects of nature, and must exercise a beneficial effect on the development of the interior of Africa, which has already become perceptible, and will continue to grow more evident every year. The first railway in Central Africa has, as it were, opened the door to the interior. Its successors in the Uelle region and Manyema will serve to develop promising districts, and enable the authorities to assert their power for the maintenance of peace and security in the remote parts of the territory, still separated by months of journey from the principal centres of the administration. The future growth of the Congo State depends mainly on the introduction of railways, which have to be well chosen in their position, cheap in their construction, and yet built with a proper regard for stability and endurance. At the same time the political position does not admit of any delay in the commencement of the more important of these lines.

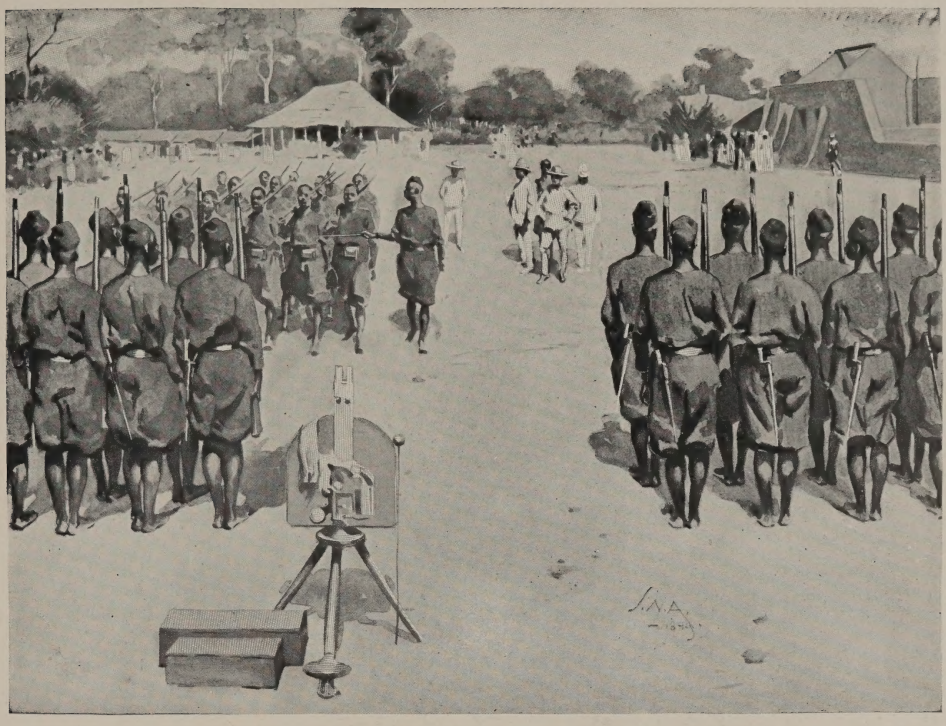


A BASKET OF PALM-NUTS.

To sum up the general position occupied by the Congo State at the present time, we see a territory of about 900,000 square miles regularly organized and formally recognized under an independent sovereign, who has accepted several responsibilities from an international point of view, such as the maintenance of free trade, the suppression of slavery, the control of the liquor traffic, and the observance of a strict neutrality. The sovereign happens to be King of the Belgians, and has bequeathed within his full right and without breach of any engagement—for that with France has been waived—all his sovereign rights after his death to Belgium, his own country, so that in course of time the Congo territory will be a Belgian colony. In comparatively few years the revenue of this part of Africa has been raised from nothing to a respectable total of three-quarters of a million sterling, and the trade totals approximate to two millions, divided equally between exports and imports. All these figures will undoubtedly be increased, as the years pass, by the cultivation of coffee and other plants which are now in the experimental stage, and by the discovery of mineral deposits, which are today being carefully sought for in several directions. The introduction of railways, and of larger and faster steamers on the rivers and lakes, will accelerate the rate of progress, and it cannot be long before the revenue and trade will reach dimensions that will place the Congo State on a level with the most important divisions of Africa. Foreign capital, which has hitherto held aloof and left the development of this promising region to Belgian and a few French investors, will take courage from the results attained, and advance its pretensions to participate in the gain. The Congo State is slowly but surely moving towards that larger participation in African affairs for which its peculiar position and exceptional experiences specially fit it. It has had to face the problems for itself, and to solve them out of limited resources and under the fierce glare of hostile criticism. The problems, so far as they relate to the interior, have become more easy at the same time that the ability of the State to deal with them has much increased. Whereas the armed force used to consist of foreign mercenaries (black) hired through the good-will or indifference of England, there is now a national force of considerably over 20,000 men, officered by several hundred Europeans. The isolated Batetela rebellion, of which a great deal too much has been made, only lost the State one small portion of an extensive recruiting-ground. The military strength of the Congo State can easily be raised to a level with its material resources.

THE VILLAGE AT STANLEY FALLS.

Having thus made clear, as I hope I have done, that the Congo State, despite its being the dependency of a weak power, is equipped to take a prominent part in the solution of African problems, it is time to turn to the problems themselves and to see what they are. These may be divided under two heads—those pertinent to the Congo State itself and its internal affairs, and those in which its neighbors have a part, and which come under the head of its external relations. Taking them in their order, the first fact to strike the imagination is the enormous disparity between



THE PARADE AT STANLEYVILLE.

the whites and blacks in Central Africa. The European population of the Congo State is a little more than 3000, of whom not more than 1000 can be regarded as forming the garrison. All these are also officers, and scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land. There is no white corps to provide a phalanx for civilization should a day of danger arise. The black population is fixed at various estimates, from ten to thirty millions, and, assuming it to be fifteen millions, there is only one white person for 5000 blacks. In British South Africa, including the Transvaal, there are about 1,200,000 British, 1,300,000 Dutch, and 3,500,000 blacks; yet, despite this comparatively small difference between the two colors, there are many good authorities who still think the black peril at the Cape has not been finally dispelled. In India the white population to native is one to 2500, but the natives are not blacks, are entitled to be termed civilized, and themselves constitute, to a large extent, the support of the British government. Moreover, there is a permanent homogeneous British garrison of 70,000 men. At the present time the Congo State has none of these elements of stability; but, on the other hand, such perils as the mind may conjure up exist now only in embryo, and have no practical reality. The tribes of Central Africa have no sort of common feeling with each other. They are separated by generations of tribal war waged in the interests of cannibalism. Generations must pass away before they can learn the secret of organization and union. It is this fact alone that renders it possible for the Congo State to accomplish its task; but, on the other hand, its directors have to remember that while it commands the present, it does not command the future. The population of Central Africa is certain to rapidly increase with the absence of internal war, the suppression of cannibalism, and improved sanitation. The government has to studiously provide that its resources and its readiness to strike shall keep pace with the increase in numbers and in cohesion among themselves of its black subjects.

STANLEY FALLS, SHOWING THE WEIRS.

At the same time, apprehensions of a calamity that may never arrive will not allow it to shirk the work to which, in common with other colonizing countries of the world, it has put its hand. The attempt to raise the negro in the scale of humanity will be continued in the face of difficulty and even of discouragement. Christianity has been enlisted in the cause. Scattered over every quarter of the State are missionaries of many denominations, noble pioneers of a soothing religion and an elevating if simple education. Some, more practical than others, have added to singing and cipher-ing in their curriculum the acquisition of a trade or industry, and labor in the fields under skilful direction forms a not unwelcome and practically useful relaxation from the lessons of the school-room. In this direction good work has already been done, and a real commencement has been made towards giving the blacks the rudiments of indispensable instruction. For one of the great questions in regard to the future of the negroes is that of employment, and it is imperatively necessary to discover for them a suitable occupation. This must necessarily be one of agriculture, and therefore the missionaries have very rightly directed their main efforts to the proper training, in accordance with the simplest and most successful rules, of the African youth in the innocent toil of raising crops from the bosom of the earth. They are succeeding so well in the task that the number of capable agriculturists will soon exceed in some districts the requirements of the land under cultivation, unless the newly introduced coffee and cocoa plantations create a demand sufficient to employ the mass of the population. Up to the present the natives have been either wholly ignorant of all systems of agriculture or have employed the most primitive methods. The instruction they are receiving will enable them to take a useful part for themselves as well as for the government in the development of the State. There are, however, other directions than agriculture in which the negroes will be able to show that they are to be regarded as useful sons of toil. Forty thousand of them were employed for years in the task of carrying merchandise across the cataracts district on their backs; 10,000 of them acted as navvies on the first Congo railway; 25,000 of them are in the State service as soldiers. For men's backs improved means of communication have been and will continue to be introduced,

but many other forms of manual labor will be found. New railways must needs be constructed in many directions. They will supply the carriers who have been released from their transport service across the district of the cataracts with fresh employment. The development of the river marine, the exploitation of the forests, the spread of the coffee-plantations to dimensions that will rival those of Brazil — these are outlets that may alone suffice to supply all the needs of even fifty millions of Congolese.

There remain over and above the material wants of the people their moral claims, and the imperious obligation on the government to satisfy them. It is going but a short way on the difficult road of reformation to save the African from the alcohol poison, which would make him a monster, or to wean him from cannibalism and the other cruel practices imposed by fetichism. When success has been achieved in all these directions a good commencement will have been made, but it will only be a commencement. Unless it is accompanied by a complete building up of character, the harvest will be meagre if not barren, and the negro will easily slip back along the track by which he has been partly coaxed and partly coerced. To define the object that has to be attained is not difficult, but no one can yet pretend to prophesy how success is to be won. The problem as yet has scarcely been fully or fairly stated, and the best thinkers on the subject in Belgium, where the question has an actuality it does not possess elsewhere, are little agreed as to what has to be done or the best way to do it. Some of the more sanguine believe that the Central-African will take a large part in his own regeneration, and that educated natives will lead the masses and stimulate their development. It will indeed be an Atlantean task if the African prove insusceptible of training as a teacher of his own kith and kind, but at the present time it must be recorded that no such teachers or reformers have made their appearance, and that the Congo government receives no aid from its black subjects in discharging its onerous task. This dearth of purely native intelligence has suggested to other thinkers that the solution of the Central-African problem will be found in the gradual creation of a half-caste people in Central Africa. These point out that very much the same solution has been found in South America; but then it must be remembered that there the crossing has not taken place with negritic races. There are two other points in the matter that cannot be overlooked. Can the reformers of Central Africa count on being granted the three or four centuries of immunity from external interference that have attended the growth of South America? and how far will an imperfect half-breed, with the vices of both races and the virtues of neither, be considered a desirable addition to the world's citizens? We can do no more

THE GATEWAY AT BASOKO.

than pose the questions, before which the mind is lost in conjectures; but at least this much can be truly said: the difficulties and even the dangers that may lurk in the solution are such that no one would lightly seek to take the burden on his own shoulders, or to relieve the Congo State from a task which bristles with obstacles, and which can never offer any commensurate reward.

The internal problems with which the Congo State has and will have still more to grapple in the common interests of its own existence and of civilization might be thought to give it a special claim on the consideration and forbearance of its neighbors, and to relieve it altogether from the fear of external complications. All the powers of Europe and America sat over its début, and wished it God-speed on its errand. But they did so partly through indifference arising from ignorance of the value of Africa, and partly from mutual jealousy, which made them fear that one or other of them would absorb the continent. But the scene is changed. There is no longer indifference. The African Continent is parcelled out between great powers, except where Portugal clings to the relics of her colonial possessions, and where the Congo State gathers beneath the folds of her pacific flag the numerous and varied tribes of her vast territorial domain. The jealousy still exists; but, instead of taking the form of subterfuge at the international council-board, it stalks boldly abroad in the apparel of national policy. With these declared objects the Congo State has seriously to reckon. It must expect no more indulgence, no more exceptional treatment, and if it can hold all it possesses against the covetousness of its neighbors during the next ten years, there will be reason to marvel at its good fortune. The internal difficulties with which it must long have to cope will not avert external complications. The interest of the problem it has to solve, from a human point of view, will not make its competitors hold their hands if they think they can benefit themselves at its expense by adding to their trade or their territory.

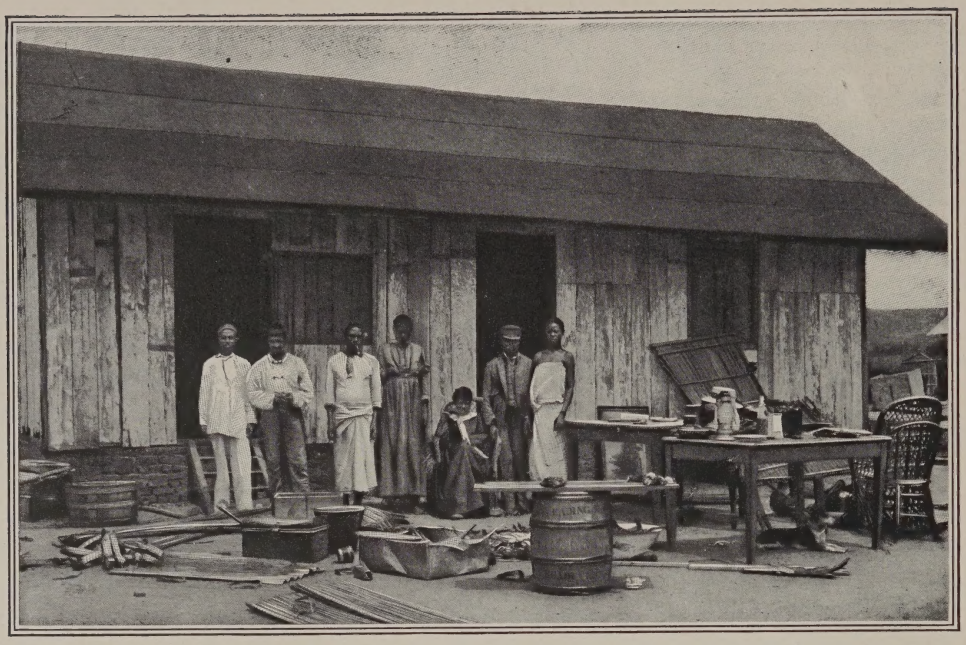
BASOKO FROM THE RIVER.

Yet it seems safe to eliminate from the problem the possibility of peril from the side of France. The boundaries have been so clearly and so amicably defined that not a loop-hole has been left for disagreement, and the general policy of France would indicate a desire to extend a protecting arm over the Congo State rather than to see it injured or assailed. This is no doubt attributable to the possession of that right of pre-emption which, waived as against Belgium, exists against every other power — at least in the opinion of the Quai d'Orsay. Looking at the matter from an entirely Congo State point of view, France is now the best of her neighbors. The community of language and the close financial relations between Paris and Brussels will result in combined efforts for the development of inner Africa that must strengthen the general accord. As much cannot be said in the case of either Germany or England, and it is with regard to them that the Congo government has to exhibit the greatest judgment.

Taking the relations with Germany in

THE BLACK QUARTER AT BASOKO.

the first place, the situation is so far peculiar that there had never been any serious disputes or diplomatic controversies between them until the other day. Germany played, both at and before the Berlin Conference, a friendly part to the Congo State. Prince Bismarck's statesmanship contributed something to its creation. But years have since passed away, and German views are not in the same position as they were, while the only land frontier between the respective territories remains what was traced on the map when the geography as well as the topographical conditions of the region was unknown. In this period no very favorable opportunity has offered for the proper delimitation of the boundary, and at the same time Germany has been striving to realize what may be the value of that possession in East Africa which England sanctioned her forming out of the dominion of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The latent wealth of German East Africa remains latent. But what has become clear is that to produce an early profit the produce of the interior must be drawn to the east coast. The success of the Congo State, however, has not merely prevented this, but it practically closes the door to any possibility of development, for the Congo and the subsidiary railway constitute a highroad across Africa, not to the Indian Ocean, but to the Atlantic. The Germans have discovered the truth of this fact, because east of Tanganyika there is now no transport trade. Under these circumstances they rejoiced, a few years ago, when they learnt by the explorations of Count von Götzen and several subsequent travellers that the bordering districts of the Congo State were of exceptional wealth and fertility, and abounded in elephants, which would produce that readily marketable article ivory. But the coveted districts were clearly beyond the limit of the imperial possessions. The newly discovered lake of Kivu could by no possibility be brought within the boundary formed by the straight line to be drawn from the point of "1° 20′ of south latitude to the northern extremity of Lake Tanganyika." But the discovery of its importance and position did not make the German government any the more amiable in 1894 when the Anglo-



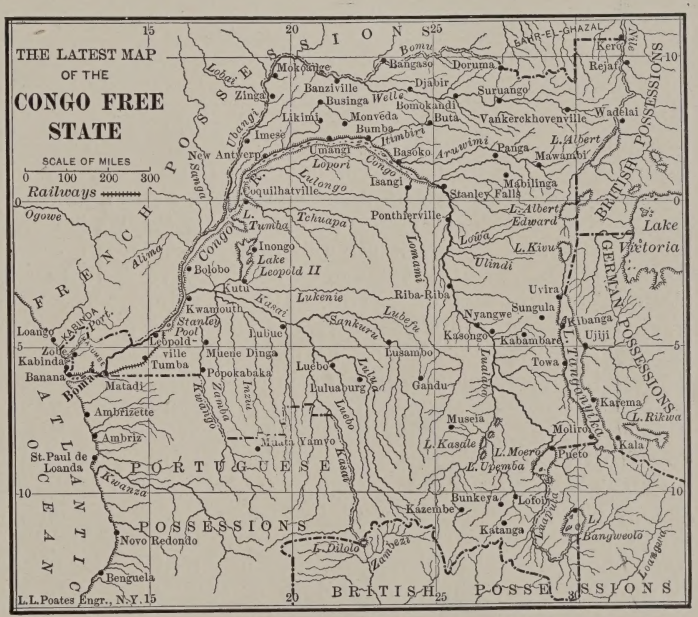
HOUSE OF A BLACK BRITISH SUBJECT AT BORNOC.

Congolese Convention was signed relating to the Bahr-el-Ghazal, and the cession of a strip of territory to Great Britain for the construction of a telegraph line from Egypt to Tanganyika. As is well known, France protested against and ignored that convention in regard to the Bahr-el-Ghazal, and Germany acted in the same manner with regard to the telegraph concession. She had no wish to see a solid and immovable red band drawn down along her entire frontier, and now events are making plain the reason why.

After Count von Götzen's journey a small Congolese force was sent to take possession of the Lake Kivu district. This was successfully accomplished, and Lieutenant Lange constructed two stations on the eastern shore of the lake, besides exploring the marshy Rusisi, which connects Kivu and Tanganyika. Two years later the Batetela mutineers of the column which Baron Dhanis was leading to occupy Redjaf, on the Nile, surprised and overwhelmed by numbers these isolated garrisons, and the authority of the Congo State lapsed for the time being. But the question may be asked parenthetically, Does a temporarily displaced authority, by the act of internal rebels, entail a lapse of the right of possession as against outsiders and intruders? At the beginning of the year 1899, when it was seen that the position taken up at Redjaf on the Nile was secure, and that the relics of the Batetelas, after causing much anxiety during the last months of the previous year, were not likely to occasion any further serious trouble, the government decided on sending a strong expedition to reoccupy Lake Kivu. A well-equipped force under the command of Captain-Commandant Hennebert, an officer of the Belgian Guides, accordingly marched from Stanleyville in the month of May, but at the moment of writing nothing is known of its fortunes after reaching Lake Kivu. It is proved by information received from other sources that the Congolese force on reaching its destination found on the other side of the lake German troops in possession of the districts that were in the hands of the State four or five years ago, and that were only temporarily lost to the State's own mutinous soldiery. There is no longer any concealment that at the same time that it sanctioned these steps on the part of the local authorities, the German government in Europe has put forward a theory on the general question of "effective occupation," which, if it were to obtain general acceptance, would have the special merit of giving Germany a new frontier

in the Rusisi and the median line of Kivu, instead of the old one to the east.

It is in this form that Germany seeks to realize the desire she has long felt to repair the natural defects of her position in East Africa, to secure a trade opening, and to place her hand firmly on the route which provides the best access from Egypt to the Cape. The rights of the Congo State were too clear in themselves and too well established to be lightly assailed without incurring a charge of wanton aggression. But the march of the Batetela mutineers past Lake Kivu, which may have been accompanied by an infraction of the German frontier, has provided her with what is thought to be a plausible reason for putting forward her claim to a more advanced frontier on the ground of non-effective occupation. The contention is made in conjunction with the precise delimitation of the Congolese-German frontier, which has long been desirable and has now become inevitable. If the matter is left to the two parties alone, it is probable that the justice of the Congo State's case will not avail against the superior power of Germany; but Article 12 of the Berlin Act provides for the mediation of other powers in such disputes, or for the submission of the rival pretensions to arbitration. The Congo State may be expected to invoke one of these agencies before submitting to coercion. The loss of half Lake Kivu and the region east of the Rusisi may seem a small matter, but it would oblige the State to assign a very large sum annually to the defence of this part of its frontier—or, if the phrase is preferred, to the making effective of its occupation of the adjacent district, the exact significance of the word "effective" to be decided, of course, by the stronger.


THE LATEST MAP
OF THE
CONGO FREE
STATE
SCALE OF MILES
0 100 200 300
Railways
Mokoangai
Bangaso
Doruma
Djabir
Banziville
Zinga
Likimi
Monveda
Bumba
Imese
New Antwerp
Umangi
Basoko
Lopori
Isangi
Coquilhatville
Ogowe
Ponthierville
Tchuapa
Inongo
Lake Leopold II
Bolobo
Kutu
Lukenie
Riba-Riba
Kwamouth
Stanley Pool
Leopoldville
Lubue
Loango
Zoli
Kabinda
Tumba
Muene Dinga
Lusambo
Banana
Matadi
Popokabaka
Luebo
Luluaburg
Gandu
Ambrizette
Ambriz
St. Paul de Loanda
Mataa
Yamvo
Kasai
Kwanza
Benguela
Novo Redondo
Kazembe
Bunkeya
Lofoi
Katanga
L. Dilolo
Zambesi
Nyangwe
Sungula
Kasongo
Kabambare
Uvira
Ujiji
Towa
Musela
Moliro
Pueto
Kala
Karema
L. Rikwa
L. Kasale
L. Moero
L. Upemba
Bangweolo
Lualaba
Lomami
Lubefu
Sankuru
Kasai
Loange
Kwango
Inkisi
Zambesi
Kwanza
Lulua
Lukuga
Congo
Aruwimi
Ituri
Semliki
Albert Nyanza
Victoria Nyanza
Tanganyika
Lake Victoria
Lake Kivu
L. Albert Edward
L. Albert
Ulindi
Lowa
Mawambi
Panga
Vankerekhovenville
Wadelai
Kero
Rejaf
Suruango
Bomokandi
Buta
Welle
Uele
Ubangi
Lubefu
Lutongo
Tshuapa
Mobilinga
Stanley Falls

THE "BARON DHANIS" ON THE UPPER RIVER.

communication from north to south has been recently placed before the public in a manner to make an arrangement with Germany counterbalance one with the Congo State. I shall not attempt to go behind the scenes of Mr. Rhodes's negotiations at Brussels and Berlin. But I venture to say, on my own personal responsibility, that they represent merely a stage in the development of an important question, and that in the end the much-talked-of Khartoum-to-Cape Railway will pass through the Congo State territory, and not through that of Germany. The construction of that railway will be a decisive fact in African history, and round its track will radiate the solution of problems which are still in embryo. On it must turn the friendly or the unfriendly relations that will subsist in the future between the Congo State and the British government. There may be some uncertainty in the prospect, but one can scarcely doubt that the reasons for a mutually good understanding are too potent for a serious disagreement.

Enough has now been said to give the reader a general idea of the part that the Congo State will play in African problems. The creation of the political genius of King Leopold of the Belgians, it has risen to its present height of prosperity and power by his incessant exertions as an administrator and care as a diplomatist. The efforts hitherto made by the Belgians are quite inadequate. They have left their sovereign to do everything. For the retention of what has been gained they must give freely their efforts, their treasure, and, if necessary, their lives to the task of security and consolidation. If they do not, they will inevitably be left behind in the race of international competition, and the prophecy of some of the Belgians will be realized, that "they have only created the Congo to be eaten up by the English." And that saying brings me to my final point. At all costs, by sacrifices of sentiment and, if inevitable, of substance, the Congo government must keep not merely on good terms, but in cordial and confidential touch with the British. It must prove that it is doing their work, that its rivers and its waters lie as free and as open for commerce in reality as they do in name, and that the banner under which it marches is one of universal civilization, beneficial to all under it, and identical with that under which the British themselves have marched in the absorption of their share of Africa.